

Thousands Stuck On Island Hull



HULL — Many of the more than 10,000 residents of this isolated community had been evacuated by today by National Guardsmen, Coast Guards, civil defense, police and fire personnel.

But thousands more remained stranded, without light, heat or supplies on an island that used to be a peninsula.

Roadways were blocked off by coastal flooding and high snow drifts.

Coast Guard officials said many times rescue efforts were completed without any special

"When they would see us walking through the water it would give them the courage they needed to follow us back through," MKI James McKenna said last night at the Point Allerton Station. About 100 persons were housed at the Coast Guard Station where emergency generators provided heat and light during the long blackout.

Jimmy T. Taylor, Commanding Officer of the Point Allerton Coast Guard Station said the situation at the memorial School offered families lights but not much heat.

Sections of Hull in the area near that school were under about five feet of water at high tides yesterday.

Rescue efforts were hampered by the lack of an amphibious vehicle. Some areas were most accessible at high tide when small boats could be used for rescue attempts.

Frank McDuff, chairman of the board of selectmen, said as of early last night, he had no official count of persons who had been evacuated from their homes but noted there were at least 500 persons at Damon School — "with more coming in at all times."

McDuff added that moments before he had had an offer from the mayor of Gloucester for the use of an amphibian, but there was no way of obtaining it.

Basically he said National Guard and Civil Defense units were attempting to evacuate persons from their homes before the onset of the 10:45 p.m. tide last night "We're helpless, we can't do anything about it," said McDuff, who had been manning the Central Fire Dept. phones since Monday. "Basically we're trying to keep people together so that when phone calls come in we know where they are. A lot of false runs have been made because phone callers have asked for help and when we get there they're gone."

Citizens reported that yesterday

morning's tide turned Kingsley Road into a river. Evacuation was pretty much left up to the citizens' requests. Officer Batt said no one was ordered to leave their home.

Berman said Nantasket Avenue was chaos. The town didn't expect to have any electricity until the weekend. Evacuees were told they would remain at their centers for three to four more days.

Meanwhile McDuff said food and blankets were in short supply, and that officials were worried first about keeping evacuees warm, fed and together.

George Washington Boulevard was shut off, Route 3A was closed and yesterday the seawall at Atlantic Avenue burst — "a couple of houses were reported floating away," Herb Waxler, civil defense director, said.

Town officials said as of last night no deaths had been reported, but a few births had occurred.

Town officials have not been keeping official records for the past 48 hours, having been too busy responding to emergencies.

One 83 year old woman from Pemberton was only induced to leave her home after officials warned her of a nearby gas leak.

That gas leak which seemed to originate from a home on Channel Street that ripped apart from its foundation could not be reached by any emergency workers equipped to shut off the flow of gas.

Coast Guard officials continued to call for help on the gas leak for hours after it was discovered.

The woman was taken to the Coast Guard Station on high ground at Pemberton.

About 100 others were stranded at the Coast Guard Station. Coast Guardsmen were cutting up aprons by 3 p.m. to help children who ran out of diapers. Many of the persons at the Coast Guard Station were forced to leave their homes without personal belongings. About half of those were children.

Although food and heat was available there, blankets and basic staples such as milk and bread were at a premium.

Officials said a curfew was in effect in the town as of 9 p.m. However, people who thought they had a chance still attempted to leave the long peninsula.

Most homes had been without heat since the power failure Monday evening. The few homes where heat was available were those with fireplaces or wood burning stoves.

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Front Street, Storm of 1978





